

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK NIACTIMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 983

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: WA, SF, PORG
SUBJ: NAMIBIA: FLEUR DE VILLIERS ON POSSIBLE SAG STEPS

1. WELL-CONNECTED "SUNDAY TIMES" COLUMNIST FLEUR DE VILLIERS
TOLD POLITICAL COUNSELOR TODAY, MAY 16, THAT THE DEPT
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA) WAS SERIOUSLY DEBATING A NUMBER
OF STEPS THAT SOUTH AFRICA MIGHT TAKE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW
DAYS TO RESTORE MOMENTUM TO THE WESTERN INITIATIVE.
DE VILLIERS UNDERScoreD THE SERIOUS RIFT IN THE CABINET
OVER THE SAG RAID INTO ANGOLA. SHE SAID SHE BELIEVES
THAT VORSTER, AS A BALANCE TO P.W. BOTHA'S RELUCTANT
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ACQUIESCENCE IN SAG'S APRIL 25 ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL,
WENT ALONG WITH THE DEMANDS FOR A FULL-SCALE RAID. DFA, SHE
SAID, HAD TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT, AND THE INITIALLY MILD
WESTERN REACTION LED THE DFA TO BELIEVE THAT THE CONSEQUENCES
WOULD NOT BE AS BAD AS THEY HAD FEARED. THE FULL
NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE INITIATIVE, SHE SAID, HAD ONLY
RECENTLY SUNK IN AND THERE WAS NOW CLEAR RECOGNITION IN

DFA THAT THE SAG HAD TO TAKE STEPS TO MOVE THE PROCESS AHEAD.

2. DE VILLIERS SAID THAT THE STEPS PROPOSED BY DFA COULD INCLUDE RELEASE OF SOME OF THE SWAPO DETAINEES AND POSSIBLY EVEN TOVIO. SHE DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE CABINET DECISION ON THE PROJECTED STEPS WOULD BE. SHE PREDICTED, HOWEVER, THAT HARD-LINERS IN THE CABINET AND THE TURNHALLE GROUP IN NAMIBIA WOULD AT THE SAME TIME BE APPLYING PRESSURE TO MOVE AHEAD WITH INITIAL STEPS TOWARD ELECTIONS. SHE DID NOT KNOW HOW SUCCESSFUL THIS GROUP WOULD BE AT THIS TIME, BUT SHE THOUGHT THAT FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA WOULD PERHAPS BE ABLE TO HOLD OFF PREJUDICIAL STEPS FOR UP TO THREE WEEKS.

3. MEANWHILE, THE "ARGUS", MAY 16 CARRIED A REPORT SIMILAR TO THAT IN "THE CITIZEN" YESTERDAY (CAPE TOWN 978), ACCORDING TO THE ARGUS REPORT, THE SAG MAY TAKE STEPS THIS WEEK "TO MAKE PROGRESS TOWARD ACHIEVING INDEPENDENCE FOR SOUTH WEST AFRICA WITH A MINIMUM DELAY". THE AIM OF THE MOVES, THE ARGUS SAID, WOULD BE "TO MAKE PREPARATION FOR THE INDEPENDENCE PROCESS WHICH WOULD NOT UPSET THE PROSPECTS OF EVENTUAL SUCCESS FOR THE WESTERN PLAN." THE ARTICLE REPORTED THAT THERE IS A STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT THE PROPOSALS WILL BE PUT TO REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CONTACT GROUP IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.
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4. COMMENT: BELIEVE DE VILLIERS HAS BEEN TALKING TO NEIL VAN HEERDEN, PIK BOTHA'S AIDE. THE "CITIZEN" AND "ARGUS" REPORTS APPEAR TO SUGGEST THAT THE STEPS BEING CONSIDERED BY THE SAG MAY GO BEYOND EFFORTS SUCH AS RELEASE OF DETAINEES AND INCLUDE MEASURES RELATED TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL. THESE COULD INVOLVE SETTING A TARGET DATE FOR ELECTIONS, OR PERHAPS INVITING THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO SEND A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS. VAN HEERDEN IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR LAST WEEK (CAPE TOWN 931) SEVERAL TIMES FLOATED THE IDEA OF A PRELIMINARY CEASEFIRE, AND IT IS CONCEIVABLE THE SAG WILL PROPOSE SOMETHING ALONG THESE LINES, IF ONLY AS A PR EFFORT.

5. THE AFTERNOON PRESS TODAY, MAY 16, ALSO CARRIES A REPORT OF AMBASSADOR MCHENRY'S REMARKS IN NEW YORK ON WHAT SOUTH AFRICA COULD DO TO HELP GAIN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTED INDEPENDENCE FOR SOUTH WEST AFRICA.
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